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(Farm Science Serves the Nation No. 8)

A THE CONQUEST OF BRUCELLOSIS (BANG'S DISEASE)

Broadcast by Ernest Moore and M. L. DuMars, Office of Information, U. S. D. A. Recorded Tuesday, January 30, 1945. Script by Josephine Hemphill. Time, without announcer's parts, 10 minutes and 25 seconds.

ANNOUNCER: (LIVE) And now by transcription -- from the United States Department of Agriculture -- a story that's closely connected with the 8-Point Dairy Program. Remember the fourth point? "Practice Disease Control Methods." Get more and better milk!

One way to get "more and better milk" -- (as our friends Ernie Moore and Duke DuMars will soon remind us) -- is to apply the results of farm science to control of brucellosis, Bang's disease, or contagious abortion. Ernie, what's the right name -- for this plague of dairy and beef cattle?

TRANSCRIPTION

ERNIE MOORE: Well in a way they're all correct. They all refer to a disease that makes a cow lose her calf prematurely...cuts down on the milk supply and the meat supply...and is a mean thing all around.

DUKE DUMARS: Ernie, I'll bet when you were on the farm, you called it "Bang's disease."

MOORE: Yes, I did. I still do -- when I'm not talking with research men. They call it "brucellosis."

DUMARS: There's a good reason for that name.

MOORE: It goes back to Sir David Bruce.

DUMARS: Wasn't he a surgeon in the English Army?

MOORE: That's right. It's quite a story. Around sixty years ago, when Bruce was stationed on the Island of Malta, where --

DUMARS: Where they have plenty of goats.

MOORE: What're you doing? Trying to rush me?

DUMARS: Yes. I've got a surprise for you.

MOORE: It'll just have to wait. As I was about to say, while Bruce was on the Island of Malta, he became interested in a strange disease that afflicted soldiers and sailors. They called it "Malta fever." In 1887, Bruce discovered that Malta fever was caused by a certain germ...found in the raw milk of infected goats.

DUMARS: When they pasteurize the milk, it's safe.

MOORE: Right. Now let's get the reason for the name "Bang's disease." This goes back to the year 1896 in Denmark, when a veterinarian named "Bang" found that another germ -- similar to the one Bruce found in the raw milk of infected goats -- is the cause of contagious abortion in cattle.

DUMARS: And in 1914 --

MOORE: In 1914 Jacob Traum, then with the United States Bureau of Animal Industry, found the germ that causes contagious abortion in swine. Then, along in --

DUMARS: 1917.

MOORE: Hey, don't rush me. Now where were we?

DUMARS: 1917.

MOORE: In 1917 Miss Alice Evans, then with the same Bureau, found that all three of these germs belong to the same group -- now called the "Brucella" group in honor of Sir David Bruce. And the disease we're talking about today is known by the scientists as "bovine brucellosis."

DUMARS: When it attacks people -- it's known as "undulant fever."

MOORE: Yes, and let's say right here, Duke -- you are not likely to get undulant fever from livestock if you understand the disease, and take the right precautions, and don't drink raw milk from infected cows. Of course pasteurized milk is always safe. By the way, do you know why it's called "undulant fever"?

DUMARS: Because the fever comes and goes -- in waves, or undulations.

MOORE: Guess you must've read those books I gave you yesterday.

DUMARS: Read every one.

MOORE: Good work!

DUMARS: And when I finally got to bed...I had the funniest dream! Kinda hard to tell...of course cows don't talk.

MOORE: No -- cows don't talk.

DUMARS: But these did. Right there in the barn.

MOORE: In what language.

DUMARS: English! The hard-boiled one was Tillie. The other was Dolly. I was telling the studio organist about it -- before you came in.

MOORE: I wondered why you had to get up here so early today.

DUMARS: And he got so interested...we decided...Ed, get us in to the barn, so we can hear those cows talking. Start with old Tillie!

MUSIC BRIDGE: "DID YOU EVER SEE A DREAM WALKING"

TILLIE: (HARD-BOILED) Well Dolly -- homo sap is at it again.

DOLLY: (SWEET AND GENTLE) Homo sap, Aunt Tillie?

TILLIE: Latin. Means "wise guy."

DOLLY: Wise guy.

TILLIE: People. All kinds of people. Scientists...farmers...people who talk on the radio...talk about brucellosis.

DOLLY: Bru-cel-lo -- ?

TILLIE: Brucellosis! Bang's disease! Contagious abortion! (Why don't they make up their minds!) In the early days...they tried to cure it with pigeon feathers.

DOLLY: With what!

TILLIE: They put pigeon feathers on a pan of hot coals...and made the poor cows breathe the smoke.

DOLLY: Did it -- ?

TILLIE: Of course not! Then they made the poor wretches chew corncobs -- soaked in carbolic acid.

DOLLY: Oh dear! But weren't people doing the best they could?

TILLIE: Oh slush!

DOLLY: I like people! They wrote a poem about us --

"The friendly cow all red and white
I love with all my heart.
She gives me cream with all her might
To eat with apple tart."

TILLIE: Oh slush. The first time I heard that-- Remember the red-headed kid used to hang around here?

DOLLY: He's gone to war.

TILLIE: Came in here one day...when he was just a kid. Stood right there in the door...and grinned...and said that poem to my face.

DOLLY: How sweet!

TILLIE: He had on a new straw hat -- when he came in.

DOLLY: Aunt Tillie! You --

TILLIE: I ate it. Right off his head. He bawled so loud they could hear him in the far pasture.

DOLLY: (REPROACHFULLY) And his father's so kind...putting a nice radio in the barn!

TILLIE: Who wants to listen to people. Why don't they give credit where credit is due.

MUSIC BRIDGE:

DUMARS: Well Ernie -- ?

MOORE: Well, well, well! Is that all?

DUMARS: No -- there's more to come!

MOORE: It's positively uncanny. And the strange thing -- even though it's a dream -- the facts are straight.

DUMARS: In the early days they did use pigeon feathers.

MOORE: And they used corncobs soaked in carbolic acid, and all sorts of other queer "remedies." But no drug or medicine ever did the least bit of good, and brucellosis went -- wickedly -- on its way. Finally things got to the point where livestock farmers were losing 50 million dollars a year -- from this disease alone.

DUMARS: Then they went to Congress -- and said they had to have some help.

MOORE: And they got some help. In 1934 Congress appropriated money to fight Bang's disease. And the Department of Agriculture, along with the States, began a control program based on "test-and-slaughter." You know what that means.

DUMARS: They tested the herds, and slaughtered infected cattle.

MOORE: And by the end of seven years, they had gotten rid of two million infected cattle. Now as a method of eradication, "test-and-slaughter" is effective, but drastic. What research men had been trying to find, for a good many years, was a way to prevent Bang's disease. And that brings us to the method of prevention now most widely used -- calfhood vaccination.

DUMARS: Don't they use a vaccine known as "strain 19"?

MOORE: That's right. It was discovered by the Bureau of Animal Industry.

DUMARS: So a certain Jersey cow...named "Lady Matilda"...had nothing to do with it!

MOORE: Oh, she may be mentioned in the records.

DUMARS: Why don't they give credit...where credit is due.

MOORE: In this case, a number of people could share the credit. Four men in the Bureau -- Schroeder, Cotton, Buck, and Smith -- started out way back in 1916 to study vaccination. Finally one of the men, Dr. Buck, discovered a certain strain of the disease germ and developed a vaccine from that. As you may know, (from your wide reading), all the vaccine made is tested by the Bureau of Animal Industry.

DUMARS: One thing I don't know-- If you were a farmer, and wanted to get your calves vaccinated, or your herd tested -- The thing to do -- get in touch with some one in the Extension Service, or with the State veterinarian, or the inspector in charge for the Bureau of Animal Industry. I was talking with Dr. Alexander Wight the other day. You know he's in charge of the Federal-State eradication program.

DUMARS: Yes --

MOORE: And he says the main thing, if you need help, is to find out what they're doing in your State and be guided accordingly.

DUMARS: So the work still goes on.

MOORE: You bet it does. In spite of shortages of manpower and transportation, they're going ahead with the program to wipe out Bang's disease. The testing has been slowed down somewhat, but vaccination of calves is going on more rapidly than ever before.

DUMARS: Is that a fact?

MOORE: Well I certainly didn't dream it up.

DUMARS: Ed, speaking of dreams, let's get the cow's point of view on this vaccine business.

MUSIC BRIDGE:

DOLLY: Aunt Tillie, why don't you like to listen to people on the radio?

TILLIE: Oh slush! What're they gabbing about now.

DOLLY: Victor's Lady Matilda!

TILLIE: Not the Lady Matilda! I was named for her!

DOLLY: They said she was mighty pretty. A sort of red fawn color.

TILLIE: Oh slush. Beauty is as beauty does. But I am proud to say... Victor's Lady Matilda...besides making a record of nearly 11,000 pounds of milk --

DOLLY: Oh my!

TILLIE: And close to 600 pounds of butterfat -- and raising three famous daughters -- besides all this, Lady Matilda helped the man who discovered strain 19 vaccine.

DOLLY: I didn't know that!

TILLIE: (You wouldn't...to hear them tell it.) But after her third daughter was born, they found that Lady Matilda had Bang's disease.

DOLLY: Oh dear! How dreadful!

TILLIE: Oh, don't emote. Because she had Bang's disease, the bovine race is better off than before. And the human race gets more milk to drink. (Sometimes I wonder what would happen to 'em -- if we didn't furnish the milk to keep 'em going.)

DOLLY: Aunt Tillie -- you remember that little boy -- you ate his hat?

TILLIE: He had it coming to him!

DOLLY: He'll soon be home on furlough.

TILLIE: What?

DOLLY: I saw a letter...it dropped out of his father's pocket --

TILLIE: Careless, as usual.

DOLLY: The letter said -- the one thing the boy wanted -- soon as he "hit the U.S.A." -- was all the fresh milk he could drink! He hadn't had any for two years.

TILLIE: No fresh milk?

DOLLY: Only once -- when he sneaked up on a cow in Normandy.

TILLIE: Humph! French cows.

DOLLY: And he said -- you won't be hurt, Aunt Tillie?

TILLIE: He said what.

DOLLY: He said, "Speaking of milk, how's old Tillie? Does she still have a grudge against me and everybody else? Anyway, I'll be mighty glad to see the old girl" --

TILLIE: Go on!

DOLLY: "Bless her cantankerous old heart!"

TILLIE: Slush.

MUSIC: "WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME"

DUMARS: (Thanks, folks.) Well Ernie -- what do you think?

MOORE: Want me to analyze your dream?

DUMARS: Does it mean something?

MOCRE: Sure! It proves what we all know. That science...farm research... has done a lot to help the farmer. But science has got to keep right on...and do a lot more...so we'll always have plenty of good wholesome food.

Of course that includes plenty of milk for GI Joe, and the kids at home, and all the rest of us. Without milk-- Well, as your friend pointed out, (and very pointedly), how could the human race keep going without plenty of milk!

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ANNOUNCER: (LIVE) It just couldn't, Mr. Moore. And that's why the farmers, with the help of science -- and the cows -- are setting out to produce 120 billion pounds of milk this year. That's the goal for 1945.

And may I suggest -- if you want more information about control of brucellosis, or Bang's disease, get in touch with your veterinarian or your County Agent.

Today's report from the United States Department of Agriculture is Number 8, in a series entitled: "How Farm Science Serves the Nation."

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